

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A service information providing apparatus including a service providing part for providing a service which a user utilizes, wherein said service providing part includes a service information providing part providing  
10 information concerning the service, the information utilized when the user selects the service, in response to a request from a user terminal.

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2. The service providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said service information providing part includes a service information obtaining part obtaining the  
20 information concerning the service from a service information storing part storing the information concerning the service.

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3. The service providing apparatus as claimed  
in claim 2, wherein the request includes a search condition,  
and said service information providing part further includes  
5 a determining part based on the search condition whether or  
not the information concerning the service obtained by said  
service information obtaining part is information concerning  
the service required by the request.

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4. The service providing apparatus claimed in  
claim 1, wherein the request includes a search condition,  
15 and said service information providing part further includes  
a searching part searching for information concerning the  
service from a service information storing part storing  
information concerning the service based on the search  
condition.

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5. The service providing apparatus as claimed  
25 in claim 1, wherein said service information providing part

includes a request analyzing part analyzing the request sent from the user terminal.

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6. The service providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said service information providing part includes a response creating part creating a response including information concerning the service utilized when the user selects the service.

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7. The service providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a service information storing part storing information concerning the service.

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8. The service providing apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein the information concerning the service stored in said service information storing part is written

in at least two languages, and

the request includes language indication information indicating a language of the information of the service, the information to be included in a response

5. corresponding to the request.

10           9. The service providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein a response corresponding to the request includes at least one of a name of the service, a name of an apparatus providing the service, icon information concerning the service as the information concerning the  
15 service.

20           10. The service providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said service providing apparatus is an image forming apparatus forming an image.

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11. A user terminal which is to be used by a user who utilizes a service provided by a service providing part, comprising:

5           a request creating part creating a request including a search condition concerning the service; and  
          a response receiving part receiving a response including information concerning the service, the information utilized when the user selects the service, the  
10       response corresponding to the request.

15           12. The user terminal as claimed in claim 11, further comprising an image generating part generating an image including the information of the service based on the response received by the response receiving part.

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          13. A service providing method in a service providing part providing a service which a user utilizes,  
25       comprising the step of (a) providing information concerning

the service utilized when the user selects the service, in response to a request from a user terminal.

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14. The service providing method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising the step of (b) obtaining information concerning the service from a service information storing part storing information concerning the service.

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15. The service providing method as claimed in claim 14, further comprising the step of determining based on a search condition whether or not the information concerning the service obtained in said step (b) is information concerning the service which is required by the request,

wherein the request includes the search condition concerning the service.

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16. The service providing method as claimed in  
claim 13, further comprising the step of searching for the  
5 information concerning the service from a service  
information storing part storing the information concerning  
the service based on a search condition,  
wherein the request includes the search  
condition concerning the service.

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17. The service providing method as claimed in  
15 claim 13, further comprising the step of analyzing a request  
sent from the user terminal.

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18. The service providing method as claimed in  
claim 13, further comprising the step of creating a response  
including the information concerning the service utilized  
when the user selects the service.

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19. The service providing method as claimed in  
5 claim 13, wherein the request includes language indication  
information indicating a language of the information of the  
service that is to be included in a response corresponding  
to the request.

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20. The service providing method as claimed in  
claim 13, wherein a response corresponding to the request  
15 includes at least one of a name of the service, a name of  
an apparatus providing the service, a type of the service,  
and icon information concerning the service as information  
concerning the service.

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21. A service utilizing method for utilizing a  
service provided by a service providing part, comprising the  
25 step of:



(a) creating a request including a search condition concerning the service; and

(b) receiving a response including information concerning the service utilized when the user selects the service, the response corresponding to the request.

10           22. The service utilizing method as claimed in claim 21, further comprising the step of generating an image including the information concerning the service, based on the response received in the step (b).

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          23. A computer-readable recording medium recorded with a service providing program for causing a computer to execute a process in a service providing part for providing a service which a user utilizes, said program comprising the code for providing information concerning the service utilized when the user selects the service, in response to a request from a user terminal.

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24. A computer-readable recording medium  
5 recorded with a service utilizing program for causing a  
computer to utilize a service provided by a service providing  
part, said program comprising the codes for:

(a) creating a request including a search  
condition concerning the service; and

10 (b) receiving a response including information  
concerning the service utilized when the user selects the  
service, the response corresponding to the request.

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25. A service information providing apparatus  
for providing information concerning a service utilized when  
a user selects the service, said service information  
20 providing apparatus comprising a managing part managing  
first information concerning a plurality of service  
providing parts providing the service and second information  
concerning the service which is provided the plurality of  
service providing parts, respectively.

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26. The service information providing  
5 apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising a  
storing part storing the first information and the second  
information.

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27. The service information providing  
apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising a  
registering part registering the first information and/or  
15 the second information to the storing part.

20 28. The service information providing  
apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising an  
updating part updating the first information and the second  
information stored in the storing part.

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29. The service information providing  
apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising an  
5 operation state determining part determining based on the  
first information concerning the plurality of service  
providing parts providing the service stored in the storing  
part whether or not each of the service providing parts  
operates.

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30. The service information providing  
15 apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising a  
service information obtaining part obtaining the second  
information concerning the service from the storing part.

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31. The service information providing  
apparatus as claimed in claim 30, further comprising a  
determining part determining based on a search condition  
25 concerning the service included in a request sent from a user

terminal whether or not the second information concerning the service obtained by the service information obtaining part is information concerning the service required in the request.

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32. The service information providing  
10 apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising a search part searching for the second information concerning the service from the storing part based on a search condition concerning the service included in a request sent from user terminal.

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33. The service information providing  
20 apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising a response generating part generating a response including the second information concerning a plurality of the services, the second information utilized when the user selects a desired service from the plurality of the services.

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34. The service information providing  
5 apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising one or  
more the service providing parts.

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35. The service information providing  
apparatus as claimed in claim 25, wherein the service  
information providing apparatus is an image forming  
apparatus for forming an image.

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36. A user terminal which a user uses to utilize  
20 a service provided by a service providing part, comprising:  
a request generating part generating a request  
including a search condition concerning the service; and  
a response receiving part receiving a response  
including information concerning the service, the  
25 information utilized when the user selects the service.

5           37. The user terminal as claimed in claim 36,  
further comprising an image generating part generating an  
image including information concerning the service based on  
the response received by said response receiving part.

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          38. A service information providing method for  
providing information concerning a service utilized when a  
15 user selects the service, said service information providing  
method comprising the step of managing first information  
concerning a plurality of service providing parts providing  
the service and second information concerning the service  
which is provided the plurality of service providing parts,  
20 respectively.

25           39. The service information providing method as

claimed in claim 38, further comprising the step of registering the first information and/or the second information to a storing part.

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40. The service information providing method as claimed in claim 38, further comprising the step of updating the first information and the second information stored in a storing part.

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41. The service information providing method as claimed in claim 38, further comprising the step of determining based on the first information concerning the plurality of service providing parts providing the service stored in a storing part whether or not each of the service providing parts operates.

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42. The service information providing method as claimed in claim 38, further comprising the step of (a) obtaining the second information concerning the service from a storing part.

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43. The service information providing method as claimed in claim 42, further comprising the step of determining based on a search condition concerning the service included in a request sent from a user terminal whether or not the second information concerning the service obtained by the step (a) is information concerning the service required in the request.

44. The service information providing method as claimed in claim 38, further comprising the step of searching for the second information concerning the service from a storing part based on a search condition concerning the service included in a request sent from user terminal.

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45. The service information providing method as  
5 claimed in claim 38, further comprising the step of  
generating a response including the second information  
concerning a plurality of the services, the second  
information utilized when the user selects a desired service  
from the plurality of the services.

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46. A service utilizing method for utilizing a  
15 service provided by a service providing part, comprising the  
steps of:

(a) generating a request including a search  
condition concerning the service; and

(b) receiving a response including information  
20 concerning the service, the information utilized when the  
user selects the service.

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47. The service utilizing method as claimed in claim 46, further comprising the step of generating an image including information concerning the service based on the response received in said step (b).

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48. A computer-readable recording medium  
10 recorded with a service information providing program for causing a computer to provide information concerning a service utilized when a user selects the service, said program comprising the code for managing first information concerning a plurality of service providing parts providing  
15 the service and second information concerning the service which is provided the plurality of service providing parts, respectively.

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49. A computer-readable recording medium  
recorded with a service utilizing program for causing a computer to utilize service provided by a service providing  
25 part, said program comprising the code for

(a) generating a request including a search condition concerning the service; and

(b) receiving a response including information concerning the service, the information utilized when the  
5 user selects the service.